MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE
STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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Middlebury College 2023-2024 SGA President
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Foreword

My time as the Student Government Association President has been my most rewarding experience at Middlebury. Serving as the representative of the Middlebury College student body was an immense honor that I will carry in every step of my future endeavors.

The growth I experienced in this position was transformative. The responsibilities accompanied with this role challenged me to grow as a person, a professional, and a leader. Navigating complex issues, facilitating difficult conversations, and representing a diverse student body, among other invaluable skills I cultivated this year, will undoubtedly prove essential as I advance my future prospects whether it is within my career, relationships, or broader pursuits.

While the role was often demanding and stressful, I am extremely grateful for this opportunity and all the lessons that came with it. I am grateful to those who made this experience enjoyable: the student body, my mentors, and especially the SGA team who has been dedicated to achieve our shared vision to serve in our best capacity. I had the privilege of meeting exceptional individuals who inspired me deeply – people who I will always look up to.

The purpose of this report is to increase transparency and accountability, as well as to celebrate SGA's achievements. As demonstrated in this report (I hope!) the SGA will continue to hold an active role in shaping our campus and representing the student body with all its diverse needs. I have confidence in what next year's leadership has to offer, and I am excited to hear about what they accomplish. My parting request to the student body, and particularly to the readers who have made it this far, is to stay engaged with this organization who work tirelessly to make Middlebury a better place for us, and for those who will follow.

To the Middlebury community, thank you!

Sincerely,

Abed Abbas '24
Middlebury College 2023-2024 SGA President

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Executive Summary

The 2023-2024 academic year marked a transformative period for the Middlebury College Student Government Association (SGA). Focused on enhancing efficiency and designing a working structure, this year's efforts laid a robust foundation for future growth and impact. Recognizing the importance of preserving institutional knowledge, the Executive Team prioritized institutionalizing transition procedures. Comprehensive SGA Handbooks were developed, serving as invaluable resources for incoming members.

The SGA Senate took on a reinvigorated role, with Senators actively sponsoring and driving significant policy initiatives. Through capacity building and leadership development, the Senate became a powerful platform for addressing diverse student needs. Internal operations underwent strategic restructuring to optimize efficiency. Revamped meeting schedules, redefined committee roles, and streamlined management structures fostered a more productive environment. The reconfiguration of previously unutilized positions, such as the Speaker of the Senate, further enhanced operational clarity and accountability.

Mental health and wellness emerged as central priorities, with the SGA launching initiatives to address student concerns about social connectedness and support systems. Efforts were made to alleviate the pressures of academic life and promote overall well-being through increased social opportunities, resources, and policy with SGA’s advocacy to reduce the graduation requirement to 34 credits. Transparency and accountability were prioritized, particularly in the SGA's work with the Middlebury College Activities Board (MCAB). After identifying concerns regarding budget management and procedural fairness, measures were implemented to improve MCAB's operations and financial oversight, ensuring responsible stewardship of student resources.

While substantial progress was made, the year presented valuable lessons. A common regret was the underutilization of committee members, overshadowed by developing the leadership structure. However, next year's SGA is poised to leverage committee members effectively. Student engagement was identified as an area requiring improvement, with plans for regular communication channels to solicit feedback. The onboarding period posed initial challenges, but by early March, astounding engagement drove numerous initiatives. With comprehensive transition preparation, the newly-elected leadership aims for an efficient workflow going into the fall. Recognizing the importance of student engagement, the groundwork was laid for more consistent communication channels, including plans for regular newsletters, reports, and town hall meetings to solicit opinions and feedback effectively. These initiatives will ensure that the SGA's efforts remain aligned with the needs and aspirations of the student body.

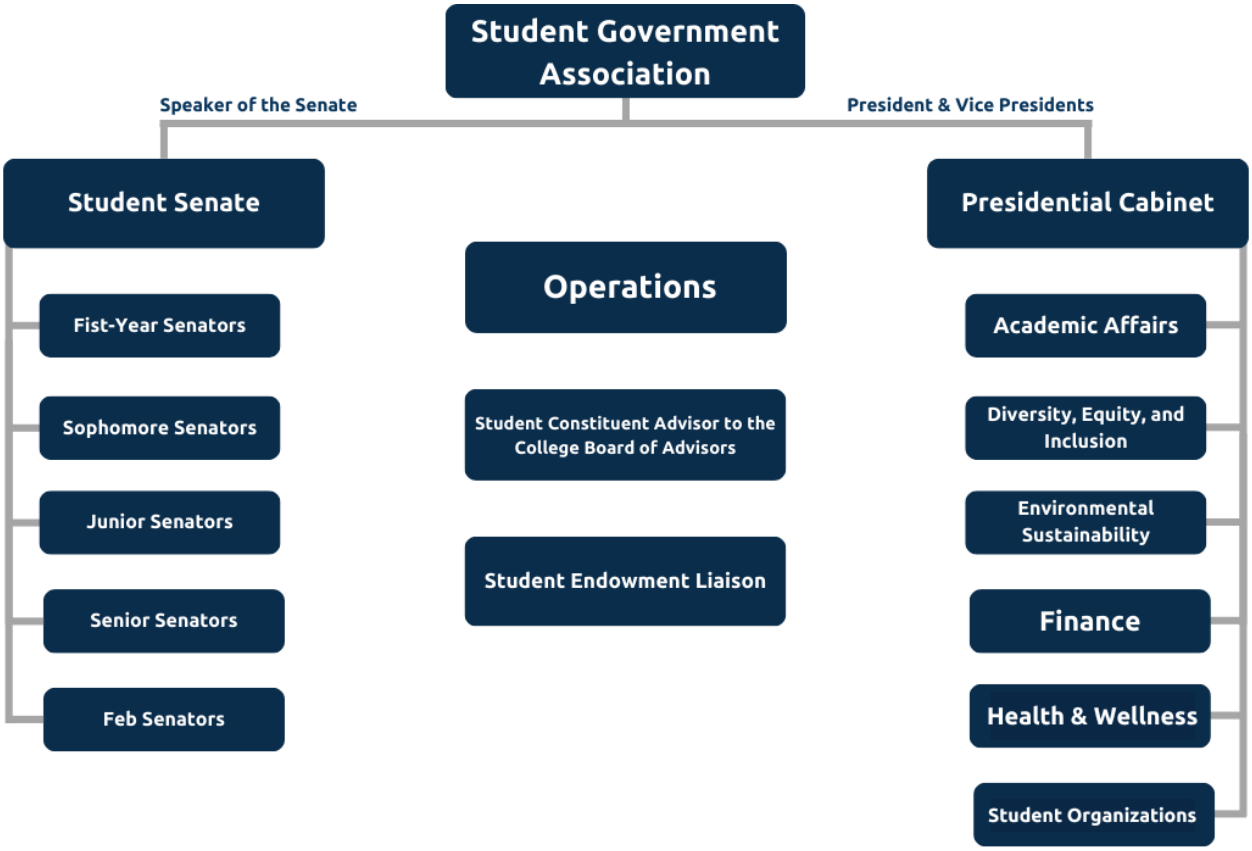
The 2023-2024 academic year witnessed significant progress, driven by a commitment to fostering a supportive, dynamic, and inclusive campus environment through strategic initiatives, collaborative efforts, and operational excellence.

SGA: Mission and Structure

"In an effort to broaden student discussion and representation on all issues, the students of Middlebury College have assembled this Student Government Association (SGA). This Student Government Association shall represent the student voice in every capacity"

- SGA Constitution

The SGA constitutes an Executive Team, an elected student Senate, and an appointed Presidential Cabinet.



The SGA President is elected by the student body. The SGA President appoints the Vice Presidents.

"SGA President: The President represents the student body at meetings or functions within and outside of the College community. The President serves as the chair of the Presidential Cabinet, and ultimately makes all Presidential Cabinet decisions. The President is responsible for setting the agenda for General and Senate Assembly meetings. While the President may recommend postponing legislation, the President may not block legislation from coming to the Student Senate. The President is ultimately responsible for the execution of all SGA action.

SGA Vice Presidents: The Vice Presidents support the President as necessary by serving in advisory, administrative, and organizational capacities, enabling the President to focus on the objectives of the SGA instead of its internal structure. The Vice Presidents develop progress tracking tools and streamline workflow within the SGA. The Vice Presidents facilitate efficient working relationships between the SGA and the College administration. The Vice Presidents ensure that all members of the SGA, especially those without previous experience, are supported in their endeavors and initiatives through regular check-ins. The Vice Presidents substitute for the President as necessary"

- SGA Bylaws

Each class year elects 2 representatives as Senators. The Senate has 10 Senators in total.

"Student Senate: To propose and pass all SGA legislation; to decide on issues relevant to the interests of the student body; to determine all official SGA positions; and to carry out all other duties as outlined in the SGA Constitution and Bylaws"

- SGA Constitution

After publicizing openings, the SGA president appoints all Cabinet Committee Directors.

"Presidential Cabinet: To implement all passed SGA legislation; ensure the continuation of existing SGA services and initiatives; pursue changes to the College and host events for the benefit of students; carry out the agenda of the SGA President as well as other duties as outlined in the SGA Constitution and Bylaws"

- SGA Constitution

Executive Team

President: Abdulrahman (Abed) Abbas '24
Vice Presidents: Fanta Diop '25 & Tara Masri '25

Elections and Voter Turnout

The SGA Spring 2024 General elections were finalized by April 15th, 10 days earlier than last year's elections. This allowed for more time in the transition period. The elections achieved a 46% turnout of the total number of active students (2,938) which is the highest in the last 4 years. When looking at the number of active students on campus for Spring 2024 (2,546), the elections achieved a 53% turnout. Elections were conducted over a 60-hour window.

Unlike previous elections, all elected seats are filled this year. More than 40 students attended the interest meeting to consider running for elections, which is unprecedented. Only 2 races were uncontested, the First-year and Feb classes.

The SGA also conducted a referendum in May, which achieved a 73% turnout of the active students on campus for Spring 2024 (2,546).

Institutionalizing Transition

A key achievement this year was to institutionalize transition. For a big organization (80+ members) with a short term and high retention, a successful transition is essential to preserve institutional knowledge and continue ongoing projects. Learning from the flaws of previous transitions, the Executive Team legislated the SGA Handbooks for the Executive Team, the Senate, and each Cabinet Committee.

The Handbooks contain essential information such as the achievements for the year, ongoing projects, general role descriptions, and tips for a successful term. Each year, SGA officers are required to add a section reflecting on their year. The Executive Team hopes that the Handbooks are used years from now, and that future leaders will find those documents a helpful resource.

The early elections timeline has also allowed the newly elected team to work tirelessly with the outgoing SGA to appoint cabinet members, learn about the role, meet community partners, and plan for the upcoming year. This will allow the newly elected team to reach their management potential within the first month of the academic year, something that took this year's team a full semester.

Empowering the Senate

The key element for representation lies in an efficient Senate. This key component was missing since before COVID as the Senate structure changed due to abolishing the commons system. After COVID, the Senators took a community-building role without much emphasis on policy and legislation.

This year, the Executive Team prioritized having a working Senate that can achieve its mission of proposing and carrying out SGA legislation. This was made possible through capacity building, leadership development, and project delegation to individual senators. The Executive Team revitalized the Speaker of the Senate Role, as the Speaker took an active role in leading the Senate.

All Senate seats were filled for most of the year, unlike the previous years where there has been retention issues, especially for Juniors and Seniors.

This year, 8/10 Senators had the opportunity to sponsor legislation, unlike the previous years where most legislations were sponsored and carried out by the President.

Restructuring Internal Operations

Although coming with no prior SGA experience allowed the executive team to take an alternative approach to internal operations, there was a lot of learning to do in the fall semester.

The Executive Team prioritized building an efficient structure that enables everyone within SGA to fulfill their responsibilities. The Executive Team had to start from scratch, as there was almost no preserved institutional memory or a transition period prior to this term.

Meetings: Instead of having a General Assembly meeting every week, the SGA met once a month. The Senate Assembly continued to meet once a week. This reduced meeting times for every SGA officer, and enabled the Senate to have more time for discussions and planning on a weekly basis.

Management Structure: The SGA President has been traditionally overworked, with the responsibility of ensuring an efficient workflow across all committees. This year, the Executive Team created a partner system, in which the Speaker of the Senate managed the Senate, and each Executive Team member worked exclusively with 2 Cabinet Committees.

The Executive Team has also started the process of creating a pipeline of committee members into directorship positions, which will further preserve institutional knowledge.

Committees: After identifying areas of improvement, the Executive Team restructured two committees.

1. Merge Relationship and Sexual Respect (RSR) with Mental Health and Wellness (MHW) to create the Health and Wellness Committee with 3 main pillars focusing on mental health, physical wellness, and sexual respect
2. Revised the role of the Student Experience Committee into the Student Organizations Committee. The Committee will have a more concrete role in working with student organizations and clubs, as well as the Student Activities Office (SAO)

SGA Website: A goal that was achieved early this year was revamping the SGA website. The website now resides on the Middlebury domain! Visit go.middlebury.edu/sga/ to stay up to date with SGA's work.

Honor Code Review

The Executive Team participated in the Honor Code Review Committee. According to the Handbook, the honor code system is supposed to be reviewed by a committee of two faculty members, two students, and the appropriate dean at least every fourth year.

The SGA sent out a survey to solicit student opinions and hosted a panel discussion to hear directly from students. This enabled the committee to prioritize student feedback in their decision making process.

10 O'Clock Ross

10 O'Clock Ross is an initiative created by the SGA in the past. This year it was a success bringing people together to socialize, addressing the need for a free late-night food option, and enabling a few students to work and get paid.

Every year, 10 O'Clock Ross operates unsustainably, leading to its closure. This year the Executive Team prioritized creating a sustainable model that ensures continuity. Going forward, the SGA will continue to oversee this initiative, but it will be managed by a paid student who handles recruiting, training, and quality assurance. The SGA hopes that students will continue to respect the place and the workers. 10 O'Clock Ross is expected to re-open on the first day of classes of Fall 2024.

Summer Storage

The Executive Team has achieved a significant advancement in enabling cheaper, more inclusive summer storage process for students. The plan revolves around storing items in-house and directly through SGA, without relying on third-party partners. Although the SGA could not achieve this vision by the end of this year, the SGA was able to grant reimbursements to students who qualify for financial assistance.

The Executive Team hopes that next year every student will have the opportunity to store their items over the summer in a cheap and accessible manner. The 2023-24 SGA has laid the groundwork for this project, and the newly-elected team are awaiting a discussion around risk management and insurance to happen next year.

Leading the Way on the Medford Hill Conference

For the first time ever, SGA joined a number of other student governments in Boston, MA. Other schools included Tufts, Hamilton, Harvard, UMass Amherst, Bates, Bowdoin and more! The Middlebury SGA learned about student government work in peer institutions and joined a network that will be a resource for the future.

Meeting other student governments has affirmed the confidence in the Middlebury SGA's organizational structure. A common trend that was observed is the lack of a working structure in many different schools. Aside from learning about different initiatives, the SGA contributed with insights to different student governments to enhance their internal operations.

The SGA Senate

Speaker of the Senate: Catherine Kish
Senior Senators: Catherine Kish & Maria Romero
Junior Senators: Fanta Diop, Tara Masri, Aniketan Pelletier (Fall), Afra Fairooz (Fall)
Sophomore Senators: YiJun Kim & Bryan Harris
First-Year Senators: Aidan Ulian, Guler Aycicek, Anina Dentel-Pham (May)
Feb Senators: Shane Silverman & Anthony Makhovik

MCAB Ad-Hoc Committee

To promote better mental health and reduce stress, the SGA directed a lot of attention to supporting the Middlebury College Activities Board (MCAB), the organization responsible for providing social enrichment and a sense of community to the student body. However, instead of opening up to collaborate, the MCAB executive team engaged unfaithfully, prompting the SGA to look closely at their procedures, expenditures, and internal dynamics. The SGA found that the student leadership of MCAB willfully ignored the guidance of their advisor, manipulated the application process through unfair and unconstitutional practices, and expended student activity funding for their personal gain, all to the detriment of the Middlebury community.

Given the evidence collected by the SGA Senate and confirmed by MCAB, MCAB reallocated 16.9% of their total budget ($68,422.79) across designations, demonstrating a lack of appropriate planning. The reallocations were from programs funded to support the student experience, like the Major Speaker Initiative, the Symposium Initiative, and the Small Concerts initiative. Previous student leaders worked hard to design and fund these programs; the SGA found it unacceptable that a handful of students can extremely override budget reallocations at the expense of the entire community. The funds were mainly reallocated to the Concerts budget, spending $240,422.79 on 2 concerts instead of the $180,000 initial allocation.

Additionally, on November 9, 2023, MCAB spent $1,011.53 of the student activity fee out of their operations budget on the personal gain of merchandise (jackets) from Aritzia. This constitutes an unethical use of funds and profits to create further compensation when acting as representatives to serve the general student body.

On May 10th, the SGA Senate unanimously voted to bring forth a conduct complaint against the Executive Team of MCAB. The SGA was deeply concerned about the handling of their budget, their exclusionary board application procedures, and their general inability to fulfill their responsibilities to the Middlebury community. The SGA submitted the conduct complaint after months of unsuccessful engagement. The SGA also passed SB7: Improving MCAB's Operations and Finance Oversight to prevent such mismanagement from happening in the future.

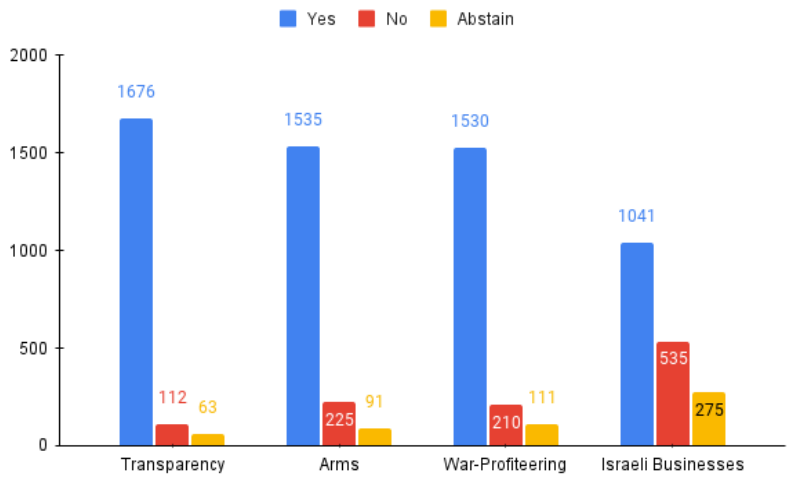
Referendum on Solidarity with Gaza

In early May, The Solidarity Encampment submitted a resolution they authored, asking SGA to hold a referendum to gauge students' opinions on the demands they are calling for. The SGA wanted to honor the peaceful activism of the students in the encampment while promoting unity through the divisive politics of the Israel-Gaza war. After over 6 hours of intense deliberation, the SGA Senate unanimously sponsored and passed SR5: Resolution Regarding A Student Referendum on Solidarity with Gaza.

The SGA discussed how activism on campus have been peaceful and constructive; how SGA is proud of this community that transformed conflict better than anywhere in the country; how some students, particularly those with empathy for the state of Israel, feel excluded or uncomfortable by the activism; and how SGA's leadership can transform Middlebury into an institution the community can be even more proud of.

The results of this referendum were presented in the May meeting of the Board of Trustees and were useful for data collection and reaffirming the importance of referendums and democratic practices.

While the administration partially agreed on the encampment's demands, and that demand 3 is up to the faculty, this referendum focused on demand 1. The requests in the referendum were not the same demands made by The Gaza Solidarity Encampment. The SGA acknowledges that these requests did not mirror the exact demands of the Gaza Solidarity Encampment, but instead reflected what is most relevant to the encampment's needs at the time. The chart below shows the voting results on financial transparency and divestment from arms manufacturing, war profiteering, and Israeli Businesses.



Mental Health

This academic year, mental health has been an important issue for the Middlebury community. In some way or another, students have been impacted by heightened stress, difficult emotions, or traumatic events. The SGA Senate has been dedicated to learning more about student health needs, available resources at Middlebury, and where there are opportunities for positive change through productive conversations with students, administrators, healthcare professionals, and faculty.

In January of 2024, the SGA Senate began an inquiry into student mental health. One of the most common complaints the SGA heard from constituents was the lack of opportunities to socialize on campus. All across the Middlebury community, the SGA heard students express a need for more social connection to disrupt the pressure of Middlebury's academics. Many students communicated their experiences of isolation, anxiety, depression, exhaustion, and unfulfillment, especially during the Fall 2023 semester.

The SGA hosted a Mental Health Discussion to present the Senate's findings. In the discussion, the SGA learned more about students' needs, and shared information about the work of the Center of Health and Wellness, the $4.9M endowment donation Middlebury received for mental health, and its yearly budget allocation.

Declining Balance

One of the original roles of declining balance was to add variety for food options as well as to relieve pressure from dining halls during peak times. Declining balance holds a special role in terms of convenience on campus for students and creates flexibility for the very busy and involved student body. This is now emphasized by the new BiHall kiosk and Crosswords and Wilson switching locations.

After conducting a simple analysis comparing current commodity prices with previous years, the SGA observed a significant increase essentially reflecting the lost value of the declining balance. To address that, the SGA's first bill this year was dedicated to increasing the declining balance from $25 to $30.

The Dining Committee

The SGA has revamped the Dining Committee to be managed by Dining Services. The Dining Committee will be Co-Chaired by Dan Detora, Executive Director of Food Services Operations, and a student member. This committee will be tasked with helping Dining Services improve

the student dining experience on campus through feedback. Students will review menus, layout, hours of operation, and more. This committee will meet once a month.

Sophomore Class Dinner

The SGA Sophomore Committee, led by the Sophomore Senators, held a Sophomore Class Dinner in Atwater. The dinner featured a Korean Barbecue menu, trivia, and prizes. This class dinner format was the first of its kind in at least the last 4 years, and it will serve as a pilot for future semesterly class dinners to promote community building within classes.

List of Bills & Resolutions

F2023-SB1: Accounting the Declining Balance (10/6/23)

F2023-SR1: Call to Extend CR/NCR Alternate Grade Mode for F23 (11/12/23)

W2024-SR2: Resolution Regarding Middlebury's Commitment to Welcome Indigenous Presence on Campus(1/22/24)

W2024-SR3: Resolution Regarding Middlebury's Ethics in Investment and Consumer Partnership Related to Indigenous Peoples (1/22/24)

S2024-SB2: Creation of the Dining Committee (3/7/24)

S2024-SR4: Resolution to Reduce Graduation Credit Requirements from 36 to 34 Credits (3/14/24)

S2024-SB3: Feb Senator Election Bill (4/26/24)

S2024-SB4: The Handbooks Bill (5/3/24)

S2024-SB5: Constitutional Amendments (5/3/24)

S2024-SB6: Bylaws Amendments (5/3/24)

(Amended) S2024-SR5: Resolution Regarding A Student Referendum on Solidarity with Gaza (5/5/24)

S2024-SB7: Improving MCAB's Operations and Finance Oversight (5/10/24)

S2024-SB8: Creating a Sustainable Model for 10 O'Clock Ross (5/10/24)

S2024-SB9: SGA's Information Policy (5/10/24)

Cabinet Committees

Academic Affairs

Directors: Michael Eller '24 & Chris Martucci '25

Reducing the Graduation Requirement from 36 to 34

In January, the SGA Academic Affairs Committee started this project with a primary goal of having the faculty vote on a motion to reduce the graduation requirement from 36 to 34 credits for all students. This is a way to create equity in the number of classes students have to take at Middlebury. As it stands, students with AP/IB credits only have to take 34 courses at Middlebury, meaning that they are afforded the flexibility to take two semesters with 3 courses or take 2 J-terms off completely (Middlebury only requires students to do 2). Students without AP/IB credits do not have that privilege. This policy will hopefully promote more immersion in the curriculum and better mental health.

The Academic Affairs Committee has done a lot of research comparing Middlebury to other peer institutions, talked with the administration, collected preliminary data, passed SR4: Resolution to Reduce Graduation Credit Requirements from 36 to 34 Credits, and got the faculty to discuss the resolution in small groups with a plan to bring a motion in Fall 2024. Additionally, this proposal has brought up more conversations regarding the Middlebury curriculum in general, with a movement to revamp its requirement to meet the current needs of the student body and the mission of Middlebury College.

Expanding CR/NCR for Fall 2023

On November 17, 2023 after continuous efforts, the faculty passed the following motion:

In light of recent tragedies, the Fall 2023 deadlines for dropping a course and opting for Credit/No Credit grading will be extended until 5:00pm on December 8. Courses taken under CR/NCR for the fall 2023 semester can count for major/minor requirements, as well as distribution requirements.

This motion came as a result of SR1: Call to Extend CR/NCR Alternate Grade Mode for F23.

Departmental Mentorship Programs

The Academic Affairs Committee has also planned to have an upperclassmen to underclassmen mentorship program within each academic department starting some pilot programs Fall 2024. This is a way to promote mentorship, community, and friendships within each department. This is also a way for underclassmen to learn more about how to thrive within their major academically and professionally. For the long-term, the goal is to find a way to create a student advisory board in every department so that they can pair mentors to mentees.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Directors: Seif Alyosef '25 & Talia Chang '26

SGA x CCI Professional Development Event

In March, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee collaborated with the CCI to organize a workshop where students could get their headshots taken for free and have their resume reviewed. This program relates to DEI in the sense that students of color disproportionately lack access to affordable professional development tools.

Life Skills Workshop: Swim lessons

The DEI Committee Collaborated with the Middlebury Varsity Swim Team to teach students of color how to swim. The first trial workshop featured 6 students of color as well as a roster of athletes, and took place in early May.

Next steps in this series will include a financial literacy workshop, and bike riding lessons

Multicultural Block Party

The DEI Committee Collaborated with DMC (Distinguished Men of Color) to plan their yearly Block Party. The Committee coordinated the invitation of 10 cultural organizations (PALANA, SEAS, JUNTOS, ALIANZA, UMOJA, BSU, WOC, SASA, RAISINS, EVO) to have booths at the event to share about their culture.

Environmental Sustainability

Directors: Mariia Dzholos '24 & Duncan Kreps '24

Climate curriculum

The Environmental Sustainability Committee initiated the Climate Curriculum project by conducting extensive internal research to understand the historical and current requirements at Middlebury. They explored work done by other NESCAC institutions and examined the relationship to the "For Every Future" campaign. Interviews were conducted with seven faculty members, leading to the drafting of a requirement summary and checklist. Engaging with students, the committee discussed the initiative at meetings with environment, climate, and justice groups, shared the draft proposal and feedback form, and accepted feedback to redraft the proposal. They also solicited endorsements from student organizations. To engage faculty, the committee drafted a letter outlining their goals and the work undertaken, shared this letter and proposal with a range of faculty, and were invited to attend a faculty council meeting to discuss the initiative.

Outdoor access

The committee gathered personal anecdotes from students from low socio-economic backgrounds regarding challenges accessing outdoor recreational spaces at Middlebury. They prepared a survey to assess the level of satisfaction with outdoor access, obtained approval from the Middlebury Board of Research to conduct a campus-wide survey, and analyzed the results. Key takeaways included the need for more college-organized trips and improved transportation access. Collaborating with Fostering Inclusive Recreation Experiences (FIRE) and the Middlebury Mountain Club (MMC), the committee organized and expanded the capacity of trips for BIPOC, international, and first-generation students. They engaged with facilities to revitalize the Middlebury College public transportation system, focusing on providing transportation on weekends to outdoor areas. A proposal outlining potential routes and timelines for the Middlebury Outdoor Public Transportation initiative was developed and will be presented next year.

Convening Environmental/Climate/Justice Organizations on Campus

The committee aimed to unite student leadership by hosting regular meetings for all environmental, climate, and justice organizations on campus, fostering mutual understanding, support, and collaboration throughout the semester. By coordinating with the Climate Action Program Leadership, led by Minna Brown, the committee established dates and agendas for each meeting, ensuring no conflicts with other significant community events. At the inaugural meeting, attendees reach a consensus regarding follow-up procedures, with two meetings per semester allowing ample time to accumulate topics and concerns for discussion. Potential topics included sharing successes and challenges and brainstorming solutions for common or individual issues.

Mental Health and Wellness

Due to changing directors, the Mental Health and Wellness Committee did not reach its potential. This prompted changing the committee structure to feature 3 directors, each assigned to 1 of 3 pillars: mental health, physical wellness, and sexual respect.

Relationship and Sexual Respect

Directors: Alex Cramer '24 & Aly Fedde '25

Campus Safety App

The Relationship and Sexual Respect (RSR) Committee took critical steps towards getting a Campus Safety App for all students. This safety app would be connected directly to PubSafe dispatchers so that anyone with the app can track their walks from one place to another, have

access to a panic button, send texts and pictures directly to PubSafe, and have a more streamlined access to resources. The app would depend on geo mapping, so that, for example, someone on a run off campus could still get help and have their location shared.

The SGA Senate rejected a bill to fund the app $9,500 annually from the student activity fee, as the Senate believes student safety should not be paid for by the activity fee, but rather by the administration. Over the summer, the SGA will work with Public Safety and Information Technology to ensure the functionality of the app, and then start looking into funding sources.

Title XI Post-Process Survey

The committee worked on getting a post-process survey for Title IX and Adaptive Resolutions. From previous Zeitgeists and general sentiments, the committee have found that there is a large dissatisfaction with the Title IX office, but without any concrete reasons on why or any knowledge of what the complaints were. This optional survey would allow people who have interacted with the Title IX office in any capacity to provide feedback on how they were treated by the Title IX coordinators, whether or not the resources and options were explained clearly and respectfully, and any feedback on how the Title IX office is run, aside from changing the actual legal systems themselves. The same thing can be done with the Adaptive Resolutions process. It is SGA's hope, as well as the Title IX and AR coordinators', that this survey will help the office make changes in order to have a better reputation on campus and better serve the people it is designed for. The SGA will continue working on this project next year to conduct the survey.

Care Packages

The committee started the foundational work for providing care packages to anyone who reports incidents of harrassment or sexual assault. The goal of this project is to provide the comfort and tangible support offered by a domestic violence shelter. Items provided would include comfort items like blankets and self-care items, as well as printed copies of the resources available.

Student Experience

Due to its new mission and lack of transition, the Student Experience Committee did not reach its potential. This prompted changing the committee mission to focus on student organizations' accountability and leadership development.

Lessons Learned & Looking Ahead

Utilizing Committee Members

A common regret shared by most directors and senators, as well as the executive team was not utilizing committee members effectively. Each committee in the Senate and the Cabinet had 6 members on average, however, only 2 committees were able to staff their members on projects and initiatives regularly.

This problem could be attributed to the investment in developing the leadership structure within SGA, which overshadowed the utilization of committee members. With the new design of structure, transition, and operations, next year shall feature a promising utilization of committee members in various projects across all committees.

Student Engagement

A valid criticism for SGA this year is the lack of consistent engagement with the student body. Although most of the decision making within SGA happens through the Senate, being the elected body, there were no working mechanisms of soliciting student opinions or feedback regarding SGA's work. Additionally, as the Senate took a more active role in policy and legislation, a gap was created in serving the student body regarding community building and event planning.

Such issues could be addressed by regular newsletters, reports, office hours, class assemblies, class dinners, surveys, social media content, and town hall meetings. Next year's SGA will be able to prioritize this as the infrastructure has been created this year to allow for the mentioned mechanisms.

The Learning Curve

The hardest challenge SGA faced this year was getting SGA officers to feel engaged. The onboarding period in August was helpful for team bonding, but not as productive for project planning since we lacked experience and transitional material. It was not until the Spring for SGA to figure out a working mechanism through multiple attempts of trial and error.

Once the team reached its potential in early March, there was astounding engagement exemplified through multiple late night emergency meetings, numerous legislations, swift action on various fronts, and an astonishing presence in the conference at Tufts. With all the preparation that went into transition and this annual report, the newly-elect leadership will be able to much more efficiently get its workflow going in the fall.